UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

November 24th, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: A.I.S., Inc.,
East West Technical Services,
Fathoms Research LLC, and
MRAG Americas
At-Sea Monitors, Industry Funded Scallop Observers, and
Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers

FROM: Amy Martins
Branch Chief, Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB)

SUBJECT: Renewal of Paperwork Reduction Act Number

All NEFOP and ASM logs, as well as the Program Manuals, are printed with a Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) number. The current PRA number was set to expire November 30, 2015. The number was recently approved for an additional 3 years, with a new expiration date of October 31, 2018 (OMB Control No. 0648-0593).

You may continue using your issued logs on all observed trips. If a fisherman requests information about the expiration date listed, you should refer him or her to the FSB website, or provide them a copy of this attachment. Our observer and at-sea monitoring programs are mandatory programs and fishermen should comply with answering the questions we ask on the logs, which are cleared and authorized under the Act. If they do not provide the information, comment on your logs that you were not able to obtain the information. Any hostilities or interference with your work should be documented in your field diary and an incident report, if warranted.

Further updates to the logs and manuals are scheduled to be completed for March 1, 2016. The updated logs will have the new expiration date listed.

Thank you for your patience during this time.

Attachment: Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

Paper Reduction Act Statement

Information collected through the observer program will be used to: (1) monitor catch and bycatch; (2) understand the population status and trends of fish stocks and protected species, as well as the interactions between them; (3) determine the quantity and distribution of net benefits derived from living marine resources; (4) predict the biological, ecological, and economic impacts of existing management actions and proposed management options; and (5) ensure that the observer programs can safely and efficiently collect the information required for the previous four uses. In particular, the observer program provides information that is used in analyses that support the conservation and management of living marine resources and that are required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), Executive Order 12866 (EO 12866), and other applicable law. Most of the information collected by observers is obtained through "direct observation by an employee or agent of the sponsoring agency or through non-standardized oral communication in connection with such direct observations".

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) regulations at 5 C.F.R. 1320.3(h)(3), facts or opinions obtained through such observations and communications are not considered to be "information" subject to the PRA. The public reporting burden for responding to the questions that observers ask and that are subject to the PRA is estimated to average 74 minutes per trip, including the time for hearing and understanding the questions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. However, depending on the fishery and trip duration, the public reporting burden can range from 4-250 minutes per trip.

Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Amy Martins, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Northeast Fisheries Observer Program, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026. Providing the requested information is mandatory under regulations at 50 C.F.R. 600.746 for the safety questions and at 50 C.F.R. §600.725, §600.746, §648.11; 16 U.S.C. 1387 §118; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, 16 U.S.C. 742a §222 for the other questions. All information collected by observers will be kept confidential as required under Section 402(b) of the MSA (18 U.S.C. 1881a(b)) and regulations at 50 C.F.R. Part 600, Subpart E. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. This is an approved information collection under OMB Control No. 0648-0593 through 10/31/2018.